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MILTON'S FAME ON THE CONTINENT

By J. G. ROBERTSON

Read December 10, 1908

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Milton was the first English poet to inspire respect and win fame for our literature on the Continent of Europe, the first poet to be known and to be adjudged worthy of knowing by continental critics: and he was the only English writer whom the biographical lexicons of the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century considered it necessary to discuss at length. To *Paradise Lost* was due, to an extent that has not yet been fully realized, the change which came over European ideas in the eighteenth century with regard to the nature and scope of epic poetry; that work was the mainstay of those adventurous critics who dared to vindicate in the face of French classicism the rights of the imagination over the reason as the creative and motive force in poetry. Milton's influence on the German literature of the eighteenth century was hardly inferior to Shakespeare's, and he cast an equally strong spell over the minds of the pioneers of French Romanticism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. These facts, if nothing else, are reason enough for considering, on the present occasion of the Tercentenary of the poet's birth, the part he has played in moulding the thought and imagination of the peoples of the Continent.

Just as Shakespeare found his way to the Continent through the medium of strolling players who performed garbled versions of his plays in the chief towns of northern Europe, so the knowledge of Milton was spread abroad by means that had even less connexion with literature. It was not as a poet at all that he first became known, but as the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the notorious defender of regicides. In 1652, John Dury published, by order of the English government, a translation of the Εἰκονοκλάστης into French,[1] which materially helped to spread Milton's fame, or rather

[1] Εἰκονοκλάστης, *ou Réponse au Livre intitulé* Εἰκὼν Βασιλική, *traduite de l'Anglois.* Londres, 1652. See D. Masson, *Life of Milton,* iv (1877), p. 448. In October, 1654, Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, and sister of Charles I, wrote from the Hague to her son, the Elector Karl Ludwig of the Palatinate, recommending him

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notoriety, abroad. Milton was mentioned, but not as a poet, by P. Costar in his *Mémoire des gens de lettres célèbres des pays étrangers*,[1] and the Comte de Comminges, Louis XIV's ambassador at the court of Charles II, made, in 1663, his famous report to his royal master to the effect that the arts and sciences had passed to France, and that, if there were any vestiges left in England, 'ce n'est que dans la mémoire de Bacon, de Morus, de Bucanan et, dans les derniers siècles, d'un nommé Miltonius qui s'est rendu plus infâme par ses dangereux écrits que les bourreaux et les assassins de leur roi'.[2] The lexicographers, C. Funccius, G. M. König, C. Gryphius, and V. Paravicini, give Milton brief notices in their biographical works,[3] but they know him only as a political agitator, and especially as the author of *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, a book to which universal attention had been drawn on the Continent by the fact of its having been publicly burned at Paris and Toulouse. In 1697, Bayle honoured Milton by devoting to him three pages of his *Dictionary*, this being the only English poet mentioned in the work.[4] Still, it is obvious that it was not Milton the poet, but Milton the political writer, in whom Bayle was interested, and he was content to repeat at second hand that *Paradise Lost* 'passe pour l'un des plus beaux ouvrages de poésie que l'on ait vu en anglais', *Paradise Regained* being 'not nearly so good'. In 1704, when the German scholar J. F. Buddaeus came to compile his *Allgemeines historisches Lexicon*, the first German encyclopaedia

to have nothing to do with Dury, who was to pass through Heidelberg, because 'he uritt and printed a booke, where he aproues the king my dear Brothers murther, which I haue read, and he has translated into french Milletons booke against the Kings booke, so as I intreat you, not to see that rascall . . .' (*Briefe der Elisabeth Stuart, Königin von Böhmen, an ihren Sohn den Kurfürsten Carl Ludwig von der Pfalz*. Herausgegeben von A. Wendland, Stuttgarter Lit. Verein, vol. ccxxviii, 1902, p. 51). Daniel Heinsius mentioned, in 1651, a translation of the *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, but this does not appear to have been published. Chapelain discusses Milton in his correspondence (*Lettres*, Paris, 1880–3, ii, pp. 103, 110), and also Guy Patin. See J. M. Telleen, *Milton dans la littérature française*, Paris, 1904, pp. 2 ff., a study to which I must here express my indebtedness.

[1] See P. N. Desmolets, *Mémoires de littérature et d'histoire*, Paris, 1726, ii, p. 355 (quoted by J. J. Jusserand, *Shakespeare en France*, Paris, 1898, p. 107). Costar died in 1660.

[2] See J. J. Jusserand, *A French Ambassador at the Court of Charles II*, London, 1892, pp. 58, 205.

[3] G. M. König, *Bibliotheca vetus et nova*, Altdorf, 1678, p. 541; C. Gryphius, *Apparatus sive dissertatio isagogica de scriptoribus historiam seculi XVII illustrantibus*, Leipzig, 1710, pp. 320, 333 ff.; V. Paravicini, *Singularia de viris eruditione claris*, Basel, 1713, p. 207.

[4] *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, Rotterdam, 1697, vol. ii, p. 590.

on a large scale, he devoted a comparatively long article to Milton,[1] but had not much more to say about Milton's poetry than what he found in Bayle. Still later, J. B. Mencke, who made extensive use of his predecessor's work, had, in his *Compendiöses Gelehrten-Lexicon* (1713), nothing to say of Milton as a poet at all, although he appears to have himself possessed a copy of the edition of *Paradise Lost* of 1704;[2] that is to say, the most generally used German biographical dictionary in the second decade of the eighteenth century did not consider it worth while even to mention Milton's poetry!

As a matter of fact, however, the ignorance of Milton's poetry at the end of the seventeenth century was by no means as great as this would imply, even in Germany. For as early as 1682—more than forty years before an attempt was made to translate Milton into any other modern European tongue—there appeared at Zerbst a translation of *Paradise Lost* into German: *Das verlustigte Paradeis, auss Johann Miltons zeit seiner Blindheit in Englischer Sprache abgefassten unvergleichlichen Gedicht,*[3] by Ernst Gottlieb von Berge, privy secretary and interpreter to the Great Elector. And even this was not the first translation of the epic, one having been begun still earlier by a German in England, Theodor Haake, a writer who forms an interesting link between Germany and England in the seventeenth century. Haake was a Rhinelander by birth, and in 1625, at the age of twenty, came over to study at Oxford and Cambridge. He virtually spent the rest of his life in England, where under the Protectorate he played an important political rôle as mediator between Cromwell and the Continent. He was also one of the first founders of the Royal Society. Haake stood on friendly terms with Milton, and his translation of *Paradise Lost*—it does not go beyond the beginning of the fourth canto—was made about the end of the seventies. It is much superior to Berge's version, which it seems to have inspired, Haake having circulated his manuscript among his continental friends. His translation, however, was neither finished

[1] *Allgemeines historisches Lexicon*, iii (I quote from the edition of 1730), p. 569 (2½ columns). J. Klefeker devoted no less than eleven pages of his *Bibliotheca eruditorum praecocium*, Hamburg, 1717 (pp. 233 ff.), to Milton.

[2] See *Bibliotheca Menckeniana*, Leipzig, 1723, p. 561.

[3] There is a copy in the British Museum. See G. Jenny, *Miltons Verlornes Paradies in der deutschen Literatur des* 18. *Jahrhunderts*, St. Gallen, 1890, pp. 5 ff. A reprint of Berge's translation, together with Haake's MS., was promised years ago by Professor A. Sauer in his series, *Bibliothek älterer deutscher Übersetzungen*, but the series seems to have been discontinued. On Berge, cp. J. Bolte, *Die beiden ältesten Verdeutschungen von Miltons Verlorenem Paradies*, in the *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, i (1888), pp. 426 ff.

nor published, and a manuscript of it is preserved in the Landesbibliothek at Cassel.[1] Berge's work, it need only be added, is clumsy and uninspired, and attracted little or no attention at the time of its publication, although the reason is perhaps to be sought not so much in its mediocre quality as in the fact that Berge, following his friend's example, made the bold attempt to translate Milton in the rimeless metre of the original. When, many years later, Gottsched and Bodmer unearthed this first German *Paradise Lost*, they had little that was favourable to say about it.[2] In the same year in which it appeared, Daniel Morhof, the first continental writer to mention Shakespeare's name, discussed Milton's rimeless verse in his *Unterricht von der teutschen Sprache und Poesie*.[3]

But in spite of this promising beginning, there was no permanency in Germany's interest in Milton; Berge's translation was soon com-

[1] 'Das Verlustigte Paradeiss auss und nach dem Englischen I. M. durch F.H. zu übersetzen angefangen—voluisse sat.' On Haake, see H. L. Benthem, *Engelländischer Kirch-und Schulenstaut*, Lüneburg, 1694, pp. 57 ff.; also A. Stern, *Milton und seine Zeit*, iii, Leipzig, 1879, p. 26. In estimating the value of translations in spreading a knowledge of Milton, it must not be forgotten that *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes* were translated into Latin in 1690 by a Scotchman, William Hog (*Paraphrasis poetica in tria Johannis Miltoni poemata*, London, 1690). This work seems to have been pretty generally known on the Continent, and it is quoted by Bayle.

[2] See Jenny, *l.c.*, pp. 6 ff., where quotations are given from Bodmer's correspondence with J. U. von König (*Literarische Pamphlete aus der Schweiz, nebst Briefen an Bodmer*, Zurich, 1781, p. 40, and A. Brandl, *Zur ersten Verdeutschung von Miltons Verlorenem Paradies*, in *Anglia*, i 1878, pp. 460 ff.). See also Hans Bodmer, *Die Anfänge des zürcherischen Milton*, in *Studien zur Literaturgeschichte M. Bernays gewidmet*, Hamburg, 1893, pp. 177 ff. 'Diese Übersetzung,' said Bodmer in the preface to the first edition of his translation of *Paradise Lost*, 'ist in keinen Ruf kommen. Wahr ist, dass Milton sehr verfinstert darinne aussiehet; doch behält auch der gefallene Poet so viel von seinem angebohrnen Glantze, dass er bey nachsinnenden Lesern ein Aufsehen machen, und zum wenigsten eine Begierde nach dem Original hat erwecken sollen' (p. 9). Cf. J. U. von König's opinion in a letter to Bodmer of May 15, 1725 (A. Brandl, *B. H. Brockes*, Innsbruck, 1878, p. 142). Gottsched's criticism is to be found in his *Beiträge zur critischen Historie der deutschen Sprache, Poesie und Beredsamkeit*, i (1732), pp. 85 ff.

[3] 'Der bekante Johannes Milton hat ein vollständig Poëma: genannt *The Paradis lost*, ohne Reimen geschrieben, woselbst er in der Vorrede dieser Schreibart das Wort redet . . . . In Teutscher Sprach hat noch niemand es [i. e., to write blank verse] zu versuchen begehret, ist auch eine unnötige Arbeit. Meines erachtens, wann einer die ungereimten Verse höher als die andern halten wolte, were es eben, als wann einer einer Strohfidel vor einer wollgestimten Geige den Vorzug gebe.' (*Unterricht von der teutschen Sprache und Poesie*, Kiel, 1682, pp. 568 f.) Morhof also mentions Milton in his *Polyhistor*, Lübeck, 1688, pp. 304 f. Cp. Jenny, *l.c.* pp. 8 ff.

pletely forgotten, if, indeed, it had ever begun to be known. H. L. Benthem, in his *Engelländischer Kirch- und Schulenstaat* (1694), a kind of guide-book to England intended especially for theologians, has something to say of Milton;[1] but otherwise I have been able to trace no German mention of Milton—with the exception of a review in the Leipzig *Acta Eruditorum* of 1696—before 1700, when the same periodical drew general attention to him by a detailed account of Toland's *Life of Milton*.[2] Hamburg was one of the principal channels through which English literature found its way to Germany, and in the early years of the eighteenth century the Hamburg poets, Wernigke, Triller, Brockes (who translated parts of *Paradise Lost*), and Hagedorn, all took a warm interest in Milton.[3]

Meanwhile, France, although no attempt had yet been made there to translate Milton, was growing increasingly curious about him.[4] A brief mention of his name in the *Journal des Savans* in 1708 was followed, two years later, by a distorted account, written in a spirit of religious intolerance, in the *Mémoires de Trévoux*; the 'impiety' and 'perfidy' of Milton's writings are condemned in no measured terms; *Paradise Lost* is disposed of as 'très séditieux', though much applauded in England, and his works in general are described as 'plutôt l'effet d'une imagination déréglée, que d'un jugement solide.'[5]

Thus it is not perhaps surprising that when the first translator of *The Spectator* into French arrived in his third volume (1718) at what he called Addison's 'critique fine et judicieuse du célèbre poëme de Milton intitulé *Le Paradis perdu*' he excused himself from translating the papers in question on the ground that the poem 'n'a pas été et qu'il ne sera sans doute jamais traduit en notre langue'.[6] A year

[1] There were two editions of this work, 1694 and 1732. For Milton, see pp. 57 ff. of the first edition, and pp. 115 ff. and 1121 ff. of the second. His poetic work receives, however, only a bare mention.

[2] *Acta Eruditorum*, 1696, pp. 226 f., 1700, pp. 371 ff. There are also frequent passing references to Milton in subsequent volumes. Toland's book was reviewed in H. Basnage de Beauval's *Histoire des ouvrages des savans*, February, 1699 (p. 87). Cp. Telleen, *l.c.*, p. 13.

[3] See Brandl, *l.c.*, pp. 35, 100 ff.

[4] Professor Spingarn has recently drawn attention to a passage in a letter from Vincent Minutoli to Bayle, of December 15, 1690, in which he refers to the high opinion the English had of Milton: 'Ils m'en ont parlé comme du *non plus vltra* de l'esprit humain' (*Modern Language Notes*, xxii (1907), p. 232). The citation is from E. Gigas, *Choix de la correspondance inédite de P. Bayle*, Copenhagen, 1890, p. 579.

[5] *Journal des Savans*, 1708, pp. 331 ff: *Mémoires de Trévoux*, 1710, pp. 2123 ff. Milton's name was put on the *Index librorum prohibitorum* in 1700, the Italian translation of *Paradise Lost* in 1732. (Telleen, *l.c.*, p. 7.)

[6] *Le Spectateur, ou le Socrate moderne*, Amsterdam, 1714 ff., iii, preface. It is

earlier, however, Milton and his verse had been treated at considerable length, and with due seriousness, in the famous *Dissertation sur la poésie anglaise* in the *Journal littéraire*,[1] an article which, although not showing much originality, was a landmark of importance in the diffusion of English literature abroad. It contained the most enlightening and suggestive criticism of both Shakespeare and Milton that had up to that date appeared in French. The next ten years seem to have marked but little advance in Milton's progress in France; a few passing references to him in periodical publications exhausts it.[2] The years 1727–8 marked, however, the turning-point of Milton's fame on the Continent; for in 1727 appeared, first in English, and some months later in a French translation by the Abbé Desfontaines, Voltaire's *Essay upon Epick Poetry*. Even in his earliest years Voltaire had the art of commanding attention when he spoke; and this essay set all Europe thinking and talking about Milton, just as the *Lettres anglaises*, a few years later, laid the foundation of Shakespeare's fame on the Continent.

The *Essay upon Epick Poetry* was a much bolder and more effective plea for Milton's poetic greatness than anything Voltaire ever wrote about Shakespeare. Indeed, it may be said that nothing had yet been written—and nothing was to be written for many years to come—by a foreigner, which was so likely to awaken admiration for Milton as the final chapter of Voltaire's English essay. Unfortunately, however, when Voltaire published his own French version of the *Essay* in 1732, as a pendant to the *Henriade*, his attitude to Milton had undergone a change, and he either suppressed altogether the laudatory things he had said in English, or at least toned them down. He

of importance to note that the early editions of *The Spectator* in French—which were so widely read all over the Continent—omitted the papers on Milton; these, however, were soon translated and published, separately, or together with the early French translations of *Paradise Lost*. (See below, pp. 326 f.)

[1] *Journal littéraire*, ix (1717), pp. 178 ff. There is also a mention of Milton in the volume for 1716. It is perhaps worth recording that Rapin, in his review of epic poetry (*Réflexions sur la Poétique*, 1709), ignores Milton completely; on the other hand, the Chevalier A. M. Ramsay does refer to him, without mentioning his name, in his *Discours sur la poésie épique et de l'excellence du Poëme de Télémaque*, Paris, 1717, p. xxviii. (Telleen, *l.c.*, p. 8.)

[2] For instance, in the *Bibliothèque anglaise*, vol. i (1717), pp. 43, 377; vol. iv (1718), pp. 539 ff. (Review of Milton's tract *Of Education*). In Armand de la Chapelle's translation of *The Tatler* (*Le Babillard*, Amsterdam, 1724) occurs the earliest French translation of lines from *Paradise Lost*, namely viii, 268–91. It is quoted in full by Telleen, pp. 13 f. In a note to vol. i, p. 427, the translator of *The Tatler* complains that Milton has filled his poem with 'tant de Métaphysique, de Spiritualités, de Combats d'Intelligences etc. qu'à mon avis quelquefois il en est inintelligible.'

did not, in the original *Essay*, conceal the fact that much in Milton's epic was at variance with the sweetness and reason of the French classic canon, and he pointed out Milton's lapses from good taste; but the tone of his criticism of *Paradise Lost*, 'the noblest Work which human Imagination hath ever attempted,' was dignified, and he regarded the poet with an admiration which could not have been assumed merely to flatter his English readers.[1]

What *Milton* [he said] so boldly undertook, he perform'd with a superior Strength of Judgment, and with an Imagination productive of Beauties not dream'd of before him. The Meanness (if there is any) of some Parts of the Subject is lost in the Immensity of the Poetical Invention. There is something above the reach of human Forces to have attempted the Creation without Bombast, to have describ'd the Gluttony and Curiosity of a Woman without Flatness, to have brought Probability and Reason amidst the Hurry of imaginary Things belonging to another World, and as far remote from the Limits of our Notions as they are from our Earth; in short to force the Reader to say, 'If God, if the Angels, if Satan would speak, I believe they would speak as they do in *Milton*.'

I have often admir'd how barren the Subject appears, and how fruitful it grows under his Hands.

The *Paradise Lost* is the only Poem wherein are to be found in a perfect Degree that Uniformity which satisfies the Mind, and that Variety which pleases the Imagination. All its Episodes being necessary Lines which aim at the Centre of a perfect Circle. Where is the Nation who would not be pleas'd with the Interview of *Adam* and the *Angel*? With the Mountain of Vision, with the bold Strokes which make up the Relentless, undaunted and sly Character of Satan? But above all with that sublime Wisdom which *Milton* exerts, whenever he dares to describe God, and to make him speak? He seems indeed to draw the Picture of the Almighty, as like as human Nature can reach to, through the mortal Dust in which we are clouded.

The *Heathens* always, the *Jews* often, and our Christian Priests sometimes, represent God as a Tyrant infinitely powerful. But the God of *Milton* is always a Creator, a Father, and a Judge, nor is his Vengeance jarring with his Mercy, nor his Predeterminations repugnant to the Liberty of Man. These are the Pictures which lift up indeed the Soul of the Reader. *Milton* in that Point as well as in many others is as far above the ancient Poets as the Christian Religion is above the *Heathen* Fables.

But he hath especially an undisputable Claim to the unanimous Admiration of Mankind, when he descends from those high Flights to the natural Description of human Things. It is observable that in all other Poems Love is represented as a Vice, in *Milton* only 'tis a Virtue. The Pictures he draws of it, are naked as the Persons he speaks of, and as venerable. He removes with a chaste Hand the Veil which covers every where else the enjoyments of that Passion. There is Softness, Tenderness and Warmth without Lasciviousness; the Poet transports himself and

[1] A copy of the English original is in the British Museum: *An Essay upon the Civil Wars of France, Extracted from curious Manuscripts, and also upon the Epick Poetry of the European Nations from Homer down to Milton.* By Mr. de Voltaire. London, 1727. My quotations are from this copy, pp. 105 ff. The French translation of 1728 I have not seen, but to judge from the specimens in the review in the *Journal des Savans*, 1728, pp. 517 ff., it was quite literal.

us into that State of innocent Happiness in which *Adam* and *Eve* continued for a short Time : He soars not above human, but above corrupt Nature, and as there is no Instance of such Love, there is none of such Poetry.[1]

As was the case with Shakespeare, however, Voltaire had no sooner awakened an interest in Milton, than he arrived at the conclusion that an excess of admiration for this foreign poet might endanger the good taste of Europe ; the piquancy of having discovered Milton gave place—as soon as others began to occupy themselves with his poetry—to repentance for the momentary back-sliding which had led him to forget his responsibilities as the guardian of literary taste and propriety. Moreover, nemesis seemed to follow his praise of Milton with sinister rapidity : only a few months after his *Essay*, there was published the first translation of *Paradise Lost* into French, that, namely, of N. F. Dupré de Saint-Maur.[2] Voltaire veered round at once ; he expunged, as we have seen, as much of the praise as he reasonably could from his *Essay on Epic Poetry* before publishing it in French, and, from now on, his attacks on Milton were even more unscrupulous than his antagonism in later life to Shakespeare. He ridiculed the English poet in his *Candide*, and even parodied him in his *Pucelle*.[3]

Dupré de Saint-Maur had prefaced his version of *Paradise Lost*—it is in prose—by a translation of Elijah Fenton's *Life of Milton*, and, in collaboration with a certain Barret, he translated those papers on Milton from *The Spectator* which the first translator of that journal had not considered it worth while to present to French readers.

[1] The French text is only a weak echo of the last paragraphs : ' On fut étonné de trouver, dans un sujet qui paraît si stérile, une si grande fertilité d'imagination ; on admira les traits majestueux avec lesquels il ose peindre Dieu, et le caractère encore plus brillant qu'il donne au diable ; on lut avec beaucoup de plaisir la description du jardin d'Éden, et des amours innocentes d'Adam et d'Ève. En effet, il est à remarquer que dans tous les autres poëmes l'amour est regardé comme une faiblesse ; dans Milton seul il est une vertu. Le poëte a su lever d'une main chaste le voile qui couvre ailleurs les plaisirs de cette passion ; il transporte le lecteur dans le jardin de délices ; il semble lui faire goûter les voluptés pures dont Adam et Ève sont remplis : il ne s'élève pas au-dessus de la nature humaine, mais au-dessus de la nature humaine corrompue ; et comme il n'y a point d'exemple d'un pareil amour, il n'y en a point d'une pareille poésie.' (*Œuvres complètes*, éd. Garnier, viii, p. 357.)

[2] Paris, 1727. Telleen (p. 142) enumerates over thirty editions, the latest in 1899.

[3] In the *Table générale et analytique*, at the end of Voltaire's *Œuvres complètes* (éd. Garnier, lii, p. 159), will be found a list of the passages in which Voltaire refers to Milton. The most important are : *Essai sur la poésie épique* (viii, pp. 306 ff., 352 ff.) ; *Siècle de Louis XIV* (xiv, pp. 76, 133, 559 f.) ; *Candide* (xxi, p. 204) ; *Dictionnaire philosophique* (xviii, pp. 580 ff., xx, pp. 35, 396).

Addison's essays on Milton in French (*Remarques sur le Paradis Perdu*) passed through some ten editions in the eighteenth century,[1] and were usually printed with translations of *Paradise Lost*; and round these, we may say, as round a pivot, continental criticism of Milton virtually turned. Stirred to opposition by Addison's eulogy, Constantin de Magny devoted in 1729 a book to the criticism of the poem, a large proportion of it being, however, devoted to a censure of Milton's erring theology; while Bernard Routh, an Irish Jesuit, in his *Lettres critiques*, mingled warm praise with a great deal of irrelevant blame based on preconceived ideas of what epic poetry should be and do.[2] The intention of both these writers was to modify by their criticism the warm reception of Milton in France; but neither, in spite of a strong distaste for Milton's theology, could withhold words of praise in estimating Milton's genius. Consequently the interest in Milton was only stimulated, and Routh's letters were frequently printed with translations of *Paradise Lost*. Dupré de Saint-Maur's version—and, as the outcome of a lengthy and somewhat acrimonious controversy with regard to the authorship,[3] it seems fairly well established that he deserves the main credit for it—was inaccurate and unsatisfactory; but it was eminently readable, even elegant, and certainly well adapted to introduce this strange foreign poet to an audience which must necessarily have experienced a shock on first acquaintance with him. The second translation—also in prose—appeared in 1754–55, and had as its author Louis Racine, the son of the great poet. Racine gave himself great pains with his work; he studied the Latin and Italian versions of *Paradise Lost*, and wrote a sensible and discriminating *Discours sur le Paradis perdu*, which is, on the whole, the best French contribution to Milton

[1] Subsequent translations were published by Élie de Joncourt, 1754, and L. Racine, 1755.

[2] C. F. Constantin de Magny, *Dissertation critique sur le Paradis perdu*, Paris, 1729; B. R*** [Routh], *Lettres critiques sur le Paradis perdu et reconquis de Milton*, Paris, 1731. In 1729 Niceron summed up what was then generally known of Milton in his *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres*, ii (1729), pp. 145-61.

[3] As to whether the translation was made by Dupré de Saint-Maur, by the Abbé de Boismorand, or by both. Telleen gathers the evidence together, *l. c.*, pp. 25 ff. The translation was well received by the French journals (*Mercure de France*, 1729, pp. 2882 ff.; *Journal littéraire*, xiv (1729), pp. 337 ff., and xv (1730), pp. 353 ff.; *Mémoires de Trévoux*, 1730, p. 1423); Spence (*Anecdotes*, ed. 1820, p. 36) states on the authority of the Chevalier de Ramsay: 'Since the translation of *Paradise Lost* into French, Milton begins to be greatly admired at Paris;' and Rollin inserted into the later editions of his *De la manière d'enseigner et d'étudier les belles-lettres* (e. g. 1740, vol. i, p. 233) a paragraph in praise of Milton. Reviews of Racine's translation will be found in the *Année littéraire*, 1755, vi, pp. 190 ff., and *Mémoires de Trévoux*, November, 1755, p. 2760.

criticism in the eighteenth century. Here, again, it might be noted that it is Milton's theology which gives most offence. But the want of freedom which straining after greater accuracy brought with it gave Racine's work a laboured impression which made it compare unfavourably with the earlier translation. So Dupré de Saint-Maur continued to hold the first place in the esteem of the French public. As early as 1730, *Paradise Lost* was supplemented by translations of *Paradise Regained*, *Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Lycidas*, and the *Hymn on the Nativity*; but these, by the Abbé Mareuil, were unfortunately indifferent in quality and attracted comparatively little attention.

Thus, from the critical years 1728–30 onwards, Milton was a well-known poet in France, perhaps the best known of all foreign poets;[1] yet the eighteenth century passed away before a really satisfactory translation of any of his works appeared. In spite of the interest which the French showed in Milton, the actual influence of the poet on French literature remained small and unimportant, imitations of *Paradise Lost* such as Durand's *La Chute de l'homme*, *La Christiade* by the Abbé de la Beaume (1753), or *Le Messie* by Dubourg (1777), are mediocrity itself, and will hardly bear comparison even with the religious epics of Bodmer and Lavater in Germany. It was clear that Milton's genius had, after all, no very firm hold on the French mind in the eighteenth century; and France could point to no criticism of Milton which penetrated beneath the surface or encompassed his poetic genius until the rise of the new romantic generation of poets and critics about a hundred years ago.

Meanwhile, two other peoples in Europe, the Italians and the Germans, were interesting themselves in Milton,[2] and in their appreciation of the poet were striking out into paths of their own; they showed themselves far less dependent on the pronouncements of the Voltairean oracle in the case of Milton at this early period than

[1] The various translations of the eighteenth century are discussed at adequate length by Telleen, *l. c.*, pp. 64 ff. *Paradise Lost* was translated by Le Roy (verse), 1775; Beaulaton (verse), 1778; Mosneron (prose), 1786; Luneau de Boisjermain (prose), 1798. A free translation of *Paradise Regained* (in verse) was published by Lancelin in 1755, under the title *Le Triomphe de Jésus-Christ dans le Désert*. More popular than any of these was the paraphrase by Madame du Boccage, *Le Paradis terrestre* (1748). There is, it might also be noted, an echo of the Lauder controversy in the *Journal étranger* of 1754 (October–November).

[2] A recent work, *Giovanni Milton e l'Italia*, by Ettore Allodoli, Prato, 1907, gives a survey of the poet's relations to Italy. For Germany, the only publication dealing with the subject—apart from contributions to periodicals—is a dissertation by Gustav Jenny, *Miltons Verlornes Paradies in der deutschen Literatur des* 18. *Jahrhunderts*, St. Gallen, 1890. This, however, makes no attempt to cover the field.

in the case of Shakespeare. It was, in fact, the Italians rather than the French who were the pioneers of a true critical appreciation of Milton on the Continent. At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were many literary ties between Italy and England, ties in some respects quite as strong as those established by the Huguenot emigrants between England and France. Lorenzo Magalotti, Anton Maria Salvini, the Abbate Conti, Paolo Rolli, the translator of Milton, and Voltaire's friend Count Algarotti, had all either spent part of their lives in England, or were actively interested in English literature. The appearance of Rolli's translation of *Paradise Lost* gave a great impetus to Italian interest, and filled the Italian journals with informing notes and articles concerning the poet, which do not always give indication of having filtered through French periodicals.[1] *Del Paradiso perduto*, translated into unrimed verse by Paolo Rolli, was published in London in a sumptuous folio volume in the year 1735, and attracted a great deal of attention, not merely in literary Italy, but in England itself, for Rolli was Italian tutor to the English royal family and evidently a *persona grata* at court.[2] This may fairly be called the best translation of Milton which the eighteenth century produced. Its chief fault, and a serious one, but imperfectly atoned for by the author's frankly expressed intention, is an extreme literalness, which tends occasionally to harshness, and offends against the spirit of Italian style and language; but it was the only translation into verse which succeeded in reproducing the dignity and sublimity of the original without falling into bombast.

Even greater significance must be attached to the points of agreement between Italian criticism and Milton's practice. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Italian critical theory, which, with the help of the Arcadians, had emerged from the vicious circles of Marinism, and passed through the scathing fire of French attacks

[1] See, for instance, the *Novelle della Repubblica delle Lettere*, Venice, 1730, pp. 76, 165, 206 f., 241 ff., 251 ff.

[2] Six years earlier, in 1729, Rolli published in London a translation of the first six books of *Paradise Lost*; but this I have not been able to see. The edition of 1735 was reprinted in 1740 at Paris and in 1742 at Verona. On Rolli see Allodoli, *l. c.*, pp. 92 ff. and 140 ff. Lorenzo Magalotti also began a translation of *Paradise Lost* (see *Giornale de' Letterati*, xiii (1713), p. 144, S. Fermi, *Lorenzo Magalotti*, Piacenza, 1903, pp. 251 f., and Allodoli, *l. c.*, p. 140). Anton Maria Salvini had likewise, if Bodmer is to be trusted (preface to the first edition of his translation of *Paradise Lost*), the intention of translating the epic, and C. Cordaro (*A. M. Salvini*, Piacenza, 1906, p. 44) mentions that fragments of a translation of Milton are preserved among Salvini's papers in the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence.

like that of the Père Bouhours, arrived at a stage when it could both appreciate Milton and draw support from him. Gravina had paved the way by his eloquent praise of Homer and Dante, and by his appreciation of qualities in these poets which were not compatible with the rationalism of Boileau's aesthetics; and L. A. Muratori had, in his plea for the supremacy of the imagination, freed epic poetry from a laming materialism and realism. In fact, although Muratori does not—in his *Della perfetta poesia italiana*, at least—mention Milton, that work might have been in great measure intended as a vindication of *Paradise Lost*. When Rolli's translation appeared, the Italians were thus better prepared than any other continental people to read Milton with understanding; and Rolli himself—as did his fellow countryman Baretti years later on behalf of Shakespeare—took up the defence of Milton when Voltaire singled out certain 'barbarian' liberties for special censure in his *Essay*.[1] Rolli's criticism does not, it must be admitted, show much acumen, and although he had some well-meaning ideas on the scope of epic poetry and the unreasonableness of the French limitations, ideas familiar in the more advanced Italian criticism of the time, he was but ill-equipped to meet so vigilant and unsparing an adversary as Voltaire. It is, however, significant for the kind of attention which Milton attracted in Italy, that Rolli believed he was doing the best service to the cause of Italian poetry, and especially of Tasso, by refuting Voltaire's fault-finding with Milton.

Unfortunately, this excellent beginning of Italian criticism in the early eighteenth century did not fulfil its promise. Muratori, Gravina, Conti, and others had familiarized their countrymen with a conception of the epic which justified Tasso and removed all obstacles from the way of an ungrudging appreciation of Milton; but the following generation of critics, men like Francesco Quadrio, Count Algarotti, and Saverio Bettinelli,[2] fell back once more on Voltaire. They had nothing for *Paradise Lost* but, at the best, cold patronage, and, at the worst, impertinent ridicule. Even that encyclo-

[1] Rolli's reply to Voltaire was written in English: *Remarks upon M. Voltaire's Essay on the Epic Poetry of the European Nations*. By Paul Rolli, London, 1728. It was subsequently appended in translation to Rolli's *Paradiso perduto*. It ought also to be added that the latter was accompanied by a succinct and accurate Life of Milton. Baretti's *Dissertation upon the Italian Poetry*, London, 1753, also takes up the defence of Milton against Voltaire.

[2] F. S. Quadrio, *Storia e ragione d'ogni poesia*, iv (1749), pp. 285 ff.; F. Algarotti's correspondence in his *Opere*, Venice, 1791–4, x, pp. 39, 125 f.; S. Bettinelli, *Opere*, Venice, 1799, iv (*Dell' entusiasmo delle belle arti*), pp. 11, 76, 210, 313; xii (*Lettere inglesi*), pp. 172, 313. Cp. Allodoli, *l.c.*

paedic critic, the Abbate Giovanni Andres, or rather Juan Andrés —he was a Spanish Jesuit who wrote in Italian—is clearly under the influence of Voltaire in his judgements of English writers, but he at least claims for Milton the distinction of being the greatest of all English poets.[1] The stimulus of the earlier and more adventurous critics was not, however, lost; and it is to be traced more clearly outside Italy than in Italy itself. In Spain, for instance, Ignacio de Luzán, one of Muratori's most distinguished disciples, was the first Spaniard to draw attention to Milton,[2] and, in Germany, Johann Jakob Bodmer, who also owed his most vital ideas to Muratori, first created that interest in the English poet which Berge, nearly forty years before, had failed to awaken.

It cannot be said that the interest of Spain in Milton during the eighteenth century was more than an indifferent curiosity. As Luzán had translated parts of *Paradise Lost* in prose, so José de Cadalso translated some passages in verse; Luis José de Velázquez mentions, in his *Orígenes de la Poesía Castellana* (1754), a translation of *Paradise Lost* by Alonso Dalda as being 'the only translation from the English that we have', and Arteaga refers to another by Antonio Palazuelos; but neither of these is apparently to be traced, and it is not unreasonable to infer that they were never published.[3] On the other hand, Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos translated the first book of *Paradise Lost*,[4] and the influence of Milton is to be seen in the work of Juan Meléndez Valdés, especially in his epics, *La Creación* and *La Caída de Luzbel*.[5] Of Spanish criticism of Milton

[1] G. Andres, *Dell' origine, progressi e stato attuale d'ogni letteratura*, Parma, 1782–5, i, pp. 418 f.; ii, pp. 74, 103, 159–64. 'Il Milton è realmente il più gran genio, di cui possa tenersi onorata l'inglesa poesia. La vastità dell' impresa ed alcuni passi sublimi del 'Paradiso perduto' gli danno la superiorità sopra tutti gli altri suoi nazionali' (ii, p. 74).

[2] See Menéndez y Pelayo, *Historia de las ideas estéticas en España*, v, 2nd ed., Madrid, 1903, pp. 29, 175.

[3] *Orígenes de la Poesía Castellana*, 2nd ed., Malaga, 1797, p. 128. See also Menéndez y Pelayo, *l.c.*, vi (1904), p. 89.

[4] G. M. de Jovellanos, *Obras* (*Bibl. de Autores Españoles*, xlvi), 1858, pp. 26 ff.

[5] See L. A. de Cueto-Valmar, *Historia crítica de la poesía castellana en el siglo XVIII*, Madrid, 1893, i, p. 407. See also Meléndez' letters to Jovellanos in Cueto-Valmar, *l. c.*, iii, pp. 59, 61, 77 f. There are Spanish translations of *Paradise Lost* by J. de Escoiquiz, three vols., Bourges, 1812; B. Ramón de Hermida, two vols., Madrid, 1814; A. Galindo, Gante, 1868; D. San Martin, Madrid, 1882; and D. San Juan, Barcelona, 1883. Translations into Portuguese by J. A. de Silva (also of *Paradise Regained*), two vols., Lisbon, 1789; F. B. M. Targini, two vols., Paris, 1823; and A. J. de Lima Leitão, two vols., Lisbon, 1840. For my references to Milton in Spain I am indebted to the kindness of Mr. James Fitzmaurice-Kelly.

there is even less to say: and probably such opinions as the Spaniards formed of Milton at the end of the eighteenth century were drawn mainly from the Spanish translation of Andres' Italian work, which had considerable influence in Spain.[1] At a later date, Manuel José de Quintana discussed Milton from the standpoint of French classicism in his *Variedades de Ciencias, Literatura y Artes*,[2] and became involved in a controversy with Blanco White.[3]

The question as to how Bodmer in Switzerland came to be attracted by Milton is one of considerable importance; for it is closely bound up with the larger question of the origins of modern German critical theory. These are to be sought, by no means exclusively, as has hitherto been assumed, in England, but also to a large extent in Italy. As a young man, Bodmer had spent happy days in Italy, ineffectually preparing himself for a mercantile career, but browsing to his heart's content on Italian books; the poetry and critical literature of Italy made him a man of letters and gave his thoughts that trend which they never subsequently lost. His interest in Milton, fanned into enthusiasm as it was at a somewhat later date by the study of Addison, was undoubtedly awakened in the first instance by his Italian friends.[4] It was, above all, Muratori who opened the eyes of Bodmer and his fellow-worker Breitinger to the immense significance of Milton for the liberation of the poetic imagination which had been so long fettered by the rules of pseudo-classicism; it was to a large extent due to the influence of the Italians that Bodmer was induced to translate *Paradise Lost*, and to set up that poem as an exemplar of the 'miraculous' in poetry. From Muratori Bodmer borrowed his doctrine of the 'fantasy' which he found so magnificently illustrated in Milton's poem; Calepio taught him that the dicta of French classicism were by no means the incontrovertible dogmas they appeared to the greater part of literary Europe; even Dubos' ideas seem to have in part reached Bodmer through Italian channels; while Conti drew his attention to the dramatic genius of the English 'Sasper'.

With these stimulating ideas in his mind, Bodmer turned to *Paradise Lost*. After some difficulty he obtained a copy of the

[1] On Andres in Spain, see Menéndez y Pelayo, *l. c.*, vi, pp. 13 ff.

[2] *Variedades*, iii (1804), pp. 164 ff., 241 ff., 361 ff.

[3] See *Correo Literario y Económico de Sevilla*, iv, pp. 177 ff., 201 ff., 209 ff. and 217 ff. The occasion of the Quintana-Blanco controversy was an imitation of *Paradise Lost*, *La Inocencia perdida* by Félix José Reinoso (1799). See Cueto-Valmar, *l. c.*, ii, pp. 122 ff.

[4] This inference is to be drawn from the preface to his translation of *Paradise Lost* (1732).

English original, and set to work at once to translate it; and just as Dupré de Saint-Maur had, following the example of Madame Dacier's *Homer*, chosen prose as the medium of his translation, so Bodmer, in 1732, turned Milton into German prose—a clumsy and unwieldy 'Swiss' German, which the author repeatedly polished in subsequent editions, but never succeeded in polishing to any high degree of brightness.[1] It was virtually round this translation of Milton that the famous literary controversy between Bodmer and Breitinger, on the one hand, and the Leipzig professor Gottsched, on the other, took place.[2] Gottsched was at first not unkindly disposed to the Swiss translation,[3] but as soon as he saw how the wind was blowing in Zürich he turned upon Bodmer with a virulence hardly surpassed even by his master Voltaire. To offer Milton to the German public as a curious example of the perversities of genius in a land like England, where good taste was only slowly gaining ingress, would have been pardonable; but to claim Milton as a master and to make *Paradise Lost* serve—and this was virtually what Bodmer and Breitinger did in their clumsy, ill-written tomes dealing with literary and critical theory[4]—as a text for Muratori's subversive theory that the imagination and not the reason was the more important factor in poetry, was quite another matter, and demanded, in Gottsched's eyes, summary treatment. To admit Milton's genius meant, as he very well realized, to endanger the foundations of the classic literature of the seventeenth century.[5]

But Gottsched was in the end worsted, and from the midst of the strife, even from the circle of Gottsched's own followers, there

[1] The data have been brought together by Hans Bodmer in the paper on *Die Anfänge des Bodmerschen Milton* already quoted. See also Th. Vetter, *J. J. Bodmer und die englische Literatur*, in the *Bodmer-Denkschrift*, Zürich, 1900, pp. 315 ff. The full title of the first edition of Bodmer's translation is 'Johann Miltons Verlust des Paradieses. Ein Helden-Gedicht. In ungebundener Rede übersetzet. Zürich, 1732'. Subsequent editions appeared in 1742, 1754, 1759, 1769, and 1780.

[2] The literature on the controversy is extensive: see F. Servaes, *Die Poetik Gottscheds und der Schweizer*, Strassburg, 1887; F. Braitmaier, *Geschichte der poetischen Theorie und Kritik von den Diskursen der Maler bis auf Lessing*, Leipzig, 1888; G. Waniek, *Gottsched und die Literatur seiner Zeit*, Leipzig, 1897.

[3] *Beiträge zur critischen Historie*, &c., i (1732), pp. 190 ff.

[4] Especially Bodmer's *Critische Abhandlung von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie*, Zürich, 1740, and his *Abhandlung von der Schreibart in Miltons Verlohrnem Paradiese*, in the *Sammlung critischer, poetischer und andrer geistvollen Schriften*, iii, Zürich, 1742, pp. 75 ff.

[5] See especially the German translation of Bayle's *Dictionary*, which was prepared under Gottsched's supervision, Leipzig, 1741–4, iii, pp. 399 ff; iv, pp. 75, 162, 688 f.

emerged in Klopstock a genuine poet, the fountain-head of whose inspiration was Milton. Klopstock's epic *Der Messias* was the first important German poem of the eighteenth century, and it owed its inception and plan to the controversy about Milton and to the example of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In view of what has already been done by German scholars,[1] it is unnecessary to estimate again Klopstock's indebtedness to his English model. The general conditions of a religious epic as laid down by Milton were accepted *in toto* by Klopstock; the latter's attitude of mind towards the sacred story and his manner of approach are clearly influenced by *Paradise Lost*. The *dramatis personae* of the two epics show many points of resemblance, Klopstock's famous angel Abbadona being modelled on Milton's Abdiel; but with regard to the methods of characterization Klopstock's shadowy, lyric art, which appealed by suggestion, and Milton's vigorous dramatic power of presentation were at opposite poles. It is important, however, to notice that it was just the aspect of Milton's poetry which had appealed so forcibly to Bodmer, namely, his imaginative flights, his grandiose conceptions of heaven and hell, which inspired the finest passages in the *Messias*.

As far as the influence of Milton in Germany is concerned, the popularity of Klopstock's epic confused entirely the issue. From now on the production of religious epics in Germany was considerable—Bodmer himself and Lavater might be mentioned as cultivating this form of literature [2]—and this production undoubtedly kept the German public in touch and familiar with Milton, but there could be no question of an influence of Milton apart from that of his German imitator, and, indeed, one might go so far as to say there was none. In 1762 a new translation of *Paradise Lost* into German hexameters was published by F. W. Zachariä, a writer who had for a time contributed to the same journal—the *Bremer Beiträge*—in which the first three cantos of Klopstock's *Messias* appeared. But in spite of his use of verse Zachariä's work does not show much advance over Bodmer's: his knowledge of English—at least at the time when he made the translation—was insufficient for his task, and he has failed

[1] See especially F. Muncker, *F. G. Klopstock, Geschichte seines Lebens und seiner Schriften*, 2nd ed., Berlin, 1900, pp. 117 ff., and cp. B. Zumbini's essay *Il Messia del Klopstock* in *Studi di Letterature straniere*, 2nd ed., Florence, 1907, pp. 153 ff.

[2] Bodmer's *Noah* appeared in 1750; Lavater's *Jesus Messias* in 1783-6, his *Joseph von Arimathia* in 1794. *Paradise Lost* no doubt also appealed strongly to Albrecht von Haller, whose early poetry—especially the didactic *Vom Ursprung des Übels* (1734)—shows Milton's influence.

to reproduce those finer qualities of Milton's verse that had attracted men of larger calibre such as Klopstock. A translation, the last of the eighteenth century in Germany, by S. G. Bürde, published in 1793, is now even more completely forgotten.[1] Thus, in spite of a deeper understanding for Milton's art in Germany than in France, it cannot be said—as it could be in the case of Shakespeare—that the Germans of the eighteenth century showed any superiority to the French as translators. In fact, of all the great poets of the world, Milton has, perhaps, been least satisfactorily translated into German, the reason being not that he is peculiarly untranslatable, but that the vital interest in him had waned before the era of accurate and painstaking translating began.

The only other continental country which, early in the eighteenth century, interested itself in Milton, was Holland. A Dutch translation of *Paradise Lost* in blank verse appeared in 1728 at Haarlem, this being the earliest of all the translations into verse. The author was J. van Zanten. A second translation—or rather paraphrase in Alexandrines of the first, for its author, L. Paludanus, was ignorant of English—was published at Amsterdam in 1730.[2] The previous history of Dutch literature might have led us to anticipate a particularly warm welcome for Milton in Holland, but the influence of *Paradise Lost* on the Dutch literature of the eighteenth century does not seem to have been great, and such influence as did show itself later in the century, probably came by way of Klopstock.

The foregoing survey of the gradual acclimatization of Milton on the Continent of Europe cannot but emphasize the close parallelism between Milton's case and that of Shakespeare. The first period,

[1] The earliest German translation of *Paradise Regained* is by S. Grynaeus, *J. Miltons Wiedereroberтes Paradies, nebst desselben Samson und einigen andern Gedichten, wie auch einer Lebens-Beschreibung,* Basel, 1752. In 1781 an anonymous translation appeared at Mannheim. In the nineteenth century *Paradise Lost* was translated into German by J. F. Pries, Rostock, 1813; F. W. Bruckbräu (also *Paradise Regained*), 1828; Rosenzweig, Dresden, 1832; Kottenkamp, Stuttgart, 1841; A. Böttger (with *Paradise Regained*), Leipzig, 1846; B. Schuhmann, Stuttgart, 1855; K. Eitner, Hildburghausen, 1865.

[2] Reviews of these translations will be found in the *Journal littéraire,* xiv (1729), pp. 237 ff., and xv (1730), pp. 245 ff. Copies of both are in the British Museum, as well as of later ones by J. H. Reisig, Zutphen, 1791–1811, and J. F. Schimsheimer. Through the courtesy of Professor H. J. C. Grierson I am able to add some references to Milton in Dutch literature kindly sent by Professor G. Kalff of Leyden: P. Huizinga Bakker, *Poëzy,* Amsterdam, 1773, iii, pp. 115 ff.; H. van Alphen, *Theorie der schoone Kunsten* (an adaptation of a German work), 1778, p. xi; J. D. Macquet, *Proeven van dichtkundige Letteroefeningen,* 1780–83, ii, p. 88 ff.; W. Bilderdijk, *De Echt,* 1812 (*Dichtwerken,* 1856–59, vii); and W. de Clercq's *Dagboek* (1812), ed. A. Pierson, 1888, I, p. 34.

when Milton was virtually only known as a dangerous political writer, corresponds with the period during which Shakespeare was little more than a name to the continental peoples. In both cases it was Voltaire who stimulated a wider interest; it pleased his vanity to pose as the discoverer of these new literary wonders, but as soon as others—often with deeper understanding and more genuine sympathy than he—came forward to espouse the cause of the English poets, Voltaire turned round, and atoned for his earlier advocacy by proclaiming, with a hostility that was intensified as time went on, the gospel of good taste and common sense, and the supremacy of the reason. Again, as in the case of Shakespeare, we find Milton taking an extraordinarily firm hold on the German mind of the later eighteenth century, becoming bound up with every literary controversy that involved the progress of German poetry; whereas in France the most vital period for Milton's, as well as for Shakespeare's influence, is to be sought in the nineteenth century. But to sum up exactly what Milton meant for continental literatures in the eighteenth century, to trace his modifying and remoulding influence, especially on the literatures of France and Germany, is by no means easy. Works have been enumerated in these literatures which may be described as either direct or indirect imitations of Milton's art and style; but, as has been seen, France produced virtually no poem of even second or third rank modelled on *Paradise Lost*, and if we are obliged to give the *Messias* of Klopstock the first place among imitations of Milton it is less because of its intrinsic value than of its relative value for the poetry of its time and country. But the vital and life-giving influence of Milton is to be sought elsewhere. It was he who, more than any other poet, gave the sober rationalism of the earlier eighteenth century a tincture of fantasy. Just as, by reinforcing the Italian critics, Milton had broken the fetters of pseudo-classicism in theory, so he became at a later period an example to the young poets who were minded to do likewise. Even Voltaire himself, with all his antagonism, would never have dared his own higher imaginative flights had it not been for the abhorred examples of Shakespeare and Milton; occasionally in his epic and dramatic poetry we feel that he has the superhuman figures and the sublime *milieu* of *Paradise Lost* in his memory. In Germany this influence is more obvious and marked, although it came in most cases, as we have seen, through Klopstock; but, whether the immediate source was the *Messias* or *Paradise Lost* itself, there is no doubt that those Titanic figures with which Goethe's imagination wrestled in his early days at Frankfort—Prometheus, Mahomet, Faust—owe

not a little of their grandeur to Milton. Mephistopheles without Satan is as unthinkable as the cosmic framework of *Faust* without Milton's world as its model.

When we turn to the nineteenth century, a marked contrast presents itself between the history of Shakespeare's fame abroad and Milton's. While Shakespeare went on extending his kingdom, invading the most remote of languages, and gaining a footing on the national theatres of almost every civilized people, Milton's fame became in Europe, with the exception of France and, to some extent, Italy, a purely literary and bookish matter. The difficulty in the case of most of the smaller European literatures was that they had not shown any receptivity for English literary ideas until the eighteenth century was well-nigh over; and by that time the religious epic, and indeed the epic generally, had ceased to be a form of poetry into which a nation poured by preference its best inspirations. At the same time, it is strange that the Scandinavian peoples—especially when we remember the almost puritanic religious revival which affected the north, and more particularly Norway, early in the nineteenth century—should have been so little influenced by Milton, and that such influence as can be traced, came rather, as in the case of other literatures, by way of Klopstock.[1] In Germany, again, Milton had at the close of the eighteenth century expended his stimulating force, and had also lost his former interest for the literary classes. Wearied by the long-drawn-out publication of *Der Messias* in the previous century, the younger generation was inclined to regard the religious epic with indifference, if not with actual dislike. Neither Goethe nor Schiller in riper years advanced beyond a cold and critical attitude towards *Paradise Lost*, and the Roman Catholic and unpuritanic religious atmosphere of the German romantic movement precluded naturally that warm partizanship which was extended so readily to Shakespeare and Calderón. Germany was even more at the mercy of foreign influences in the nineteenth century than in the eighteenth: Shakespeare, Byron, Scott, Chateaubriand, Hugo, all left deep traces on her literature, but not so the poet of *Paradise Lost*. And this seems to have been true in general of all the Germanic peoples. Translations of Milton were welcomed by all interested in the great literature of the past, but no single German, Dutch, or Scandinavian poet was gripped by Milton's genius as, for instance, Chateaubriand

[1] *Paradise Lost* was translated into Danish by J. H. Schönheyder in 1790 (also *Paradise Regained*, 1792); into Icelandic by Jón Þorláksson in 1828; into Swedish by J. G. Oxenstierna, 1815; while both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* were translated into the last-mentioned language by V. E. Öman in 1862.

was in France. Still fainter was the influence of Milton in Slavonic lands, for although these had not, like the Western European nations, outgrown the epic, Milton's uncompromising Puritanism, perhaps even the very vigour of his imagination, was not palatable to the lyric and melancholy genius of the race. Byron here, as generally in the south of Europe, was a more actual and impressive force than Milton had ever been.

But in France, as has been indicated, it was otherwise. One might even go so far as to say that the French literature of the first twenty or thirty years of the nineteenth century represents the most intense period of Miltonic influence on any alien literature. And the centre of the enthusiasm for Milton was Chateaubriand, who 'for thirty years of his life had read, re-read, and translated Milton'.[1] Madame de Staël rang in the new era with some noble words on Milton in her treatise *De la littérature* (1800),[2] but it was Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* which gave the emigrant literature its Miltonic stamp and colouring. With warm, enthusiastic, and affectionate penetration, Chateaubriand eulogized *Paradise Lost* in that work as it had never been eulogized before. The epic to him is, as a form of literature, superior to the drama, and Milton he would even place above Homer. But this was not Chateaubriand's first pronouncement upon Milton: in 1797 he had published his poem *Milton et Davenant*, and he had also given promise of his future appreciations in the *Essai sur la littérature anglaise* and in his criticism of Young (1801). His own prose epic, *Les Martyrs* (1809), is visibly inspired by Milton, and his essay *De quelques imperfections du 'Paradis perdu'* contains the warmest praise of all, for, not content with pointing out the 'imperfections', it also justifies them. In 1836 appeared Chateaubriand's own translation of *Paradise Lost*, which may without difficulty be claimed as the best translation of the poem into French prose.[3] But as a translator Chateaubriand was not alone; translation after translation seemed to spring up out of the ground in those days in France, amongst them a notable one into French verse by the poet Jacques Delille, which appeared in 1804–5, shortly after the *Génie du Christianisme*. The French critical organs were constantly occupied in discussing Milton, and, indeed, so actual and real did Milton's world become to these men that they saw in it an apt reflection of the

[1] Preface to the *Essai sur la littérature anglaise*, *Œuvres complètes*, ix, p. 2. There is an excellent chapter on Chateaubriand and Milton in Dr. Telleen's book.

[2] *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, 1820–1, iv, pp. 309 f.

[3] See *Œuvres complètes*, vols. viii and ix.

political events of their own day.[1] The enthusiasm of Chateaubriand was infectious; it passed over to other leading men of letters of the first half of the century. The dominant religious trend of Lamartine's mind would, one might have thought, have made him peculiarly receptive to Milton's influence; but that influence does not seem to have led to any direct imitation of Milton in Lamartine's poetic works; in this respect, Ossian was a much more important source of inspiration than the poet of *Paradise Lost*.[2] On the other nand, A. de Vigny was no doubt in his own epic poetry directly influenced by Milton, whom he introduced into his novel *Cinq-Mars*;[3] while Victor Hugo, in the famous manifesto of the *école romantique*, the Preface to *Cromwell* (1827), extends to Milton some of the enthusiasm he expresses for Shakespeare.[4] This admiration of Milton spread in some degree to other Latin countries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, notably to Italy, where between 1800 and 1830 there were almost as many new translations of Milton as in France.[5] Here Vincenzo Monti was a warm admirer of Milton, and in his own poetry shows constant traces of Milton's example.[6]

Milton was thus one of the forces which moulded the French emigrant literature and the more brilliant romantic poetry that followed it, perhaps an even greater force in stimulating the French imagination and the moral and religious forces that lay behind the literary revival than Shakespeare himself. It is difficult to keep asunder the many delicate threads of literary influence which manifest themselves in a modern period of literary history, and impossible to dogmatize with certainty as to the first source of any vitalizing poetic thought; but a generalization might in the present case be hazarded: of the three chief forces which influenced the French romantic move-

[1] Professor F. Baldensperger, of Lyons, draws my attention to this interesting testimony to Milton's actuality. The Council of the Devils seemed, for instance, to the *émigrés* the very likeness of the Comité de Salut Public (Clémenceau, *Le Vengeur des rois*, London, 1801, chant I^er^, str. lv; Un officier de cavalerie, *De l'influence de la philosophie sur les forfaits de la Révolution*, Paris, n.d., p. 66).

[2] Lamartine's *Héloïse et Abélard* (1864) contains an essay on Milton.

[3] *Cinq-Mars*, Paris, 1826, chapter xx and conclusion.

[4] Milton is also one of the characters of the drama.

[5] Allodoli enumerates no less than twelve between those of Silvio Martinengo and L. A. Corner, in 1803, and Andrea Maffei's in 1863. Mention should also be made here of a volume of Milton criticism by F. Scolari, *Saggio di critica sul Paradiso Perduto di Giovanni Milton*, Venice, 1818. For French translations in the nineteenth century, see Telleen, *l.c.*, pp. 122 ff.

[6] Monti's *La Bellezza dell' universo* and *Prometeo* are clearly influenced by Milton. See B. Zumbini, *Sulle poesie di Vincenzo Monti*, Florence, 1886, pp. 3 ff., 107 ff. Cp. also V. Monti, *Opere*, vi, Milan, 1842, pp. 459 ff., and Allodoli, *l.c.*, pp. 123 ff.

ment from without, Shakespeare provided a poetic world rich in fancy and humour, and never out of touch with reality, the German poets satisfied the fantastic cravings of the romantic mood, while Milton deepened and reinvigorated the French imagination and taught it how to soar. His contribution to the French romantic ideas was thus in some respects the most fundamental and vital of all, but as a consequence it manifested itself more among those writers who prepared the French mind for the seeds of romanticism than in the romanticists themselves. Without what Milton had to give, it is difficult to see how the French could have become within the short space of a generation in so high a degree receptive to the imaginative world of Shakespeare and Goethe. Milton, in other words, helped to bridge the gulf that separated the negative critical spirit of the age of Voltaire from the positive and constructive epoch of romanticism. He deepened the national imagination, which had grown shallow and cynical; he helped to bring back to France that faith in God and man which the Encyclopaedists, followed by the Revolution, had destroyed; and he inspired Chateaubriand with the best elements in that most hopeful and promising of all the books which opened the new century, the *Génie du Christianisme*. This would seem to be Milton's peculiar mission at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and, in so far as he succeeded, he must be counted among the fundamental forces behind the evolution of our own age.[1]

[1] It is beyond the scope of the present paper to discuss the contributions of foreign nations to the scholarly investigation and criticism of Milton's life and work, but mention might be made of A. Geffroy, *Étude sur les pamphlets politiques et religieux de Milton*, Paris, 1848; E. de Guerle, *Milton, sa vie et ses œuvres*, Paris, 1868; Taine's criticism in his *Histoire de la littérature anglaise*, ii, pp. 327–435; and E. Scherer's essay on *Milton et le Paradis perdu* (*Études sur la littérature contemporaine*, vol. vi, pp. 151 ff., Paris, 1876), in French; A. Stern's *Milton und seine Zeit*, three vols., Leipzig, 1877–9, in German; and B. Zumbini's essay in *Studi di letterature straniere*, 2nd ed., Florence, 1907, pp. 61 ff., in Italian.

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